

0026660

**From:** [Mike Murray](#)  
**To:** [Britta Muiznieks](#)  
**Cc:** [Darrell Echols](#); [Michelle Bogardus](#); [Thayer Broili](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Pea Island Nest Relocation Procedures  
**Date:** 06/08/2010 03:51 PM

---

Britta,

Thank you and Michelle for following up with local FWS and with Matthew. In general, I like that the PINWR procedures are "criteria driven" and provide a "decision tree" approach, although I cannot comment on the reasonableness of the specific criteria or their applicability to our situation. I agree that we don't want to relocate 95% of our nests. Can we come up with our own criteria and decision-tree approach that describes what we are doing (or what we want to do)? Key point for me is NOT that we have the same approach or criteria as PINWR, but that we have a sufficiently detailed description of what we are doing (or want to do) to allow FWS and WRC to provide feedback, so that the final policy clearly benefits the turtles, WRC and FWS can fully endorse the policy, staff can follow it, and we at HQ can explain it to people (or provide them with a copy of it), if asked. I'm comfortable waiting to see Michelle's description of our current approach, then asking questions about it (if any) and seeking additional feedback from WRC and FWS, as appropriate.

Thanks again,

Mike Murray  
Superintendent  
Cape Hatteras NS/ Wright Brothers NMem/ Ft. Raleigh NHS  
(w) 252-473-2111, ext. 148  
(c) 252-216-5520  
fax 252-473-2595

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE**

This message is intended exclusively for the individual or entity to which it is addressed. This communication may contain information that is proprietary, privileged or confidential or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure.

▼ [Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS](#)

**Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS**

06/08/2010 03:24 PM

To: Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
cc: Darrell Echols/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Michelle Bogardus/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Thayer Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS

Subject: Pea Island Nest Relocation Procedures 

Mike-  
Here is a copy of Pea Island's Sea Turtle Nest Relocation Procedures.

[attachment "PINWR Turtle Nest Relocation Procedures.doc" deleted by

Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS]

We spoke with Matthew regarding Pea Island's Nest Relocation Procedures and he requested that I submit a request for comments to him in writing. Pea Island Staff had told him that they were following the NCWRC Handbook. However, they are not following the fundamental rule "management and protection should be undertaken in a manner that will minimize impacts on the natural order of reproduction". If we were to implement Pea Island's Relocation Procedures at the Seashore we would be relocating >95% of our nests. It is easy to come up with protocols for relocating all nests or no nests but it is harder to come up with a relocation protocol that would actually benefit the species. From one year to the next, dunes/swales will form in new locations and disappear in others. Nests laid early in the season may not be affected whereas nests laid later in the season in the same location may be affected by storms. Michelle is working on drafting the Park's current relocation guidelines which will be included in our DEIS comments. One of the first questions that needs to be asked when a nest is discovered is whether or not a nest will be destroyed if left in situ. I wish we had a crystal ball to help us predict what is going to happen at each nest site but unfortunately nest relocation is not an exact science. One thing that is for sure is that some nests that should have been relocated will not get relocated and others that are relocated could have been left in place depending on how conservative or pro-active the nest relocation program is. Matthew did emphasize that the goal should not always be to maximize the number of hatchlings reaching the water as this will have very little effect on the population in the future. One thing that has been speculated is that the number of males in this DPS of breeding age may become a limiting factor which is why we would not want to relocate the majority of our nests to the upper beaches where the nests would be less susceptible to overwash and warmer temperatures and therefore produce fewer males.

I'm attaching the email that I sent to Matthew. He knows that we are on a time crunch and will try to respond in a timely fashion.

[attachment "20100607 email Muiznieks to Godfrey-Pea Island Nest Relocation Procedures.pdf" deleted by Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS]

That's all I have for now. We'll try to address these issues/concerns in our comments as well.

Britta Muiznieks  
Wildlife Biologist  
Cape Hatteras National Seashore

252-995-3740-**Office**  
252-475-8348-**Cell**  
252-995-6998-**FAX**

▼ Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS

**Mike  
Murray/CAHA/NPS**

05/25/2010 01:16 PM

To Michelle Bogardus/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
cc Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Thayer  
Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Darrell Echols/CAHA/NPS@NPS  
Subject DEIS issue

Michelle,

In reading through some of the DEIS comments on turtle nest management, NCWRC writes: "Considerations of nest relocation can be contentious and based on inexact science. To reduce the level of subjectivity in decision making, we recommend the NPS evaluate the applicability of sea turtle nest relocation criteria, similar to those used at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, that quantify geomorphic characteristics of beach width, beach slope and distance from mean high tide." In addition, in a recent phone call with Pete Benjamin, he mentioned that CAHA may have some of the same conditions as PINWR (narrow beaches due to perpetuation of the man-made dune ridge) and we may want to consider similar criteria for nest relocation.

Would you please check with someone at Pea Island NWR to see what criteria they use to determine where and when to relocate a turtle nests. Ideally, get a copy of their procedures or any other information that provides the details of how they measure and apply the criteria.

Please provide the information to Thayer, Britta and me, and provide input to Britta/Thayer regarding your opinion of the applicability of the PINWR criteria to CAHA beaches. Would using something similar reduce the subjectivity of nest relocation decisions. Then, on June 10-11, Thayer and Britta will be participating in a meeting to discuss possible changes in the ORV plan and related species management procedures, which will include a review of the turtle nest relocation procedures

Thanks,

Mike Murray  
Superintendent  
Cape Hatteras NS/ Wright Brothers NMem/ Ft. Raleigh NHS  
(w) 252-473-2111, ext. 148  
(c) 252-216-5520  
fax 252-473-2595

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This message is intended exclusively for the individual or entity to which it is addressed. This communication may contain information

that is proprietary, privileged or confidential or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure.